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Khomeini Goons Take the Place Of Shah's Gang

Iranians in the United States, who used to live in dread of the shah's secret police, now apparently find themselves in similar fear of Ayatollah Ruhollah Khomeini's goon squads.

Intelligence sources suspect that an undercover campaign of intimidation and harassment against anti-Khomeini Iranians in this country is coordinated, if not directly planned, by Khomeini agents at the Iranian Interest Section in Washington. The interest section, part of the Algerian Embassy, has handled Iranian affairs since President Carter closed the Iranian Embassy three years ago.

Intelligence sources told my associate Lucette Lagnado that Iranians living here have contacted the State Department on several occasions to express their fear of the Iranian Interest Section. They are convinced that the interest section is behind some ugly incidents directed at Khomeini's opponents in the United States.

Khomeini's minions are believed to be modeling their behavior after the "diplomats" of another dictator, Muammar Qaddafi of Libya. Qaddafi has not shrunk from sending

assassins into the United States to deal with troublesome exiles.

There is no evidence that Khomeini's secret police have gone to that extreme. But the Iranian Interest Section's methods of harassment have been only slightly subtler. Employees of the interest section have been identified on the fringes of anti-Khomeini demonstrations in Washington.

In a little-noticed incident last summer, Khomeini's thugs came out of the closet. It occurred at the student center of Southern Methodist University in Dallas.

SMU students held a meeting to protest the excesses of the Khomeini regime. The lectures and songs were interrupted suddenly when about 75 hoodlums carrying guns and knives tried to enter the meeting place.

Quick action by local police prevented a major disaster, but not before three anti-Khomeini students were injured. The attack served its purpose: the meeting was broken up and the lesson was driven home that public opposition to Khomeini can be dangerous.

An investigation of the SMU fracas developed the information that many of the pro-Khomeini intruders were from various parts of the country and were considered "pros" who had participated in similar incidents at other colleges.

Intelligence sources believe that the melee in Texas was planned at the Iranian Interest Section in

Washington. If so, it demonstrates the thoroughness of Khomeini's surveillance over dissidents in the United States. Not an anti-Khomeini sparrow falls without creating interest at the Iranian Interest Section.

Anatomy of an Error: No matter how hard you try, it's impossible to avoid an occasional blooper.

In a recent story on the state visit of Philippines President Ferdinand Marcos and his wife, Imelda, I wrote that "CIA Chief William Casey personally conferred with [Mrs. Marcos] last July to make arrangements for the Marcos' state visit." But when the sentence appeared in newspapers across the country, the CIA chief was identified as "William Colby," who was CIA director under Presidents Nixon and Ford.

In my office, the final version of each story is double-checked by myself and three editors, plus any reporter who may have contributed to it. At United Feature Syndicate, it is reviewed by at least two editors and then read back to my office to make sure no mistakes were made in transmission. This was the procedure used on the Marcos story, and when it was read back from New York the CIA chief was still Casey.

Subsequently, during processing at the syndicate, someone whose mind was momentarily adrift typed in Colby instead of Casey. For the record, it was Casey who met with Mrs. Marcos. Colby, a private attorney in Washington, has my apology.